

Message Text

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TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER, HENRY A.) OTRA, SG

SUBJ: SECRETARY'S TRIP TO AFRICA: BIOGRAPHIC DATA:

PRESIDENT SENGHOR OF SENEGAL

REF: STATE 95877

A. POLITICAL POSITION: LONG THE DOMINANT POLITICAL FIGURE IN SENEGAL, SENGHOR IS NOT ONLY THE THEORETICIAN, BUT ALSO THE MOTOR OF THE POLITICAL SYSTEM HE HAS BUILT AROUND THE UNION PROGRESSISTE SENEGALESE AND THE SENEGALESE GOVERNMENT, ADMINISTERING THEM BOTH THROUGH AN OVERLAPPING GENERAL DIRECTORSHIP. HE CLAIMS LOYALTY FROM THE OLDLINE POLITICANS THROUGH HIS COMRADE-IN-ARMS RELATIONSHIP DATING FROM THE PRE-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD. HE DOMINATES THE YOUNGER SET BY SHEER INTELLECTUAL SUPERIORITY AND BY ASSIGNING THEM ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS THAT EXCEED THEIR FIRM GRASP. HE MEETS OPPOSITION CHALLENGES BY PULLING THE PLUG FROM THEIR INCUBATORS.

PRESIDENT SENGHOR IS WIDELY ADMIRERD AND RESPECTED FOR HIS ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF BRINGING STEADY DEVELOPMENT, GROWING PRESTIGE AND EXPANDING REGIONAL IMPORTANCE TO AN ESSENTIALLY POOR COUNTRY. THOUGH UNIVERSITY YOUTH AND OTHER INTELLECTUAL CRITICS CRITICIZE HIS PRO-FRENCH BIAS, THERE IS A GRUDGING ADMITTANCE AMONG MANY THAT HE HAS USED THE FRENCH FOR SENEGAL'S BENEFIT. THE THOUGHT IS: "WE WILL DO IT HIS WAY AS LONG AS HE IS AROUND--BUT THERE WILL BE CHANGES THEREAFTER." SENGHOR HAS MORE FRIENDS THAN ENEMIES AMONG AFRICAN CHIEFS OF STATE.

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HE BOWS IN SENIORITY TO IVORY COAST'S HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY, BUT

WE ESTIMATE SENGHOR NOW ENJOYS MORE PRESTIGE IN FRANCOPHONE CIRCLES. HE WEARS HIS OWN SENIORITY LIGHTLY. IN AFRICA HIS RELATIONS ARE CURRENTLY PARTICULARLY GOOD WITH THE CHIEFS OF STATE OF MOROCCO, TUNISIA, EGYPT, UPPER VOLTA, GABON, THE GAMBIA, ZAMBIA, ZAIRE AND C.A.R. THEY GRAVITATE FROM VERY GOOD TO FAIR WITH THE OTHER FRANCOPHONE AFRICAN STATES INCLUDING MAURITANIA, WITH NEIGHBORING GUINEA BISSAU, AND WITH ANGLOPHONE WEST AND EAST AFRICA. HIS AFRICAN NEMESIS IS SEKOU TOURE AND, WHILE NOT PERSONIFIED, RELATIONS WITH NIGERIAN LEADERS SINCE GOWON'S EXIT ARE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT.

SENGHOR HAS USED HIS PERSONAL PRESTIGE AND PERSUASIVE POWERS TO GOOD ADVANTAGE IN AFRICAN FORA, HELPING GENERATE AFRICAN OPPOSITION TO ARAB EFFORTS TO EXPEL ISRAEL FROM INTERNATIONAL BODIES AND, AT JANUARY SUMMIT, MOBILIZING MODERATE OPPOSITION TO RECOGNITION OF MPLA REGIME IMPOSED BY USSR/CUBA. SENGHOR HAS SKILLFULLY REINFORCED HIS AND SENEGAL'S PRESTIGE BY STAGING MAJOR INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES IN DAKAR ON ISSUES WHERE HE WISHES TO APPEAR IN PROGRESSIVE FOREFRONT (DAKAR COMMODITIES CONFERENCE IN FEB 1975, DAKAR CONFERENCE ON NAMIBIA AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN JAN 1965, JOINT AFRO-ARAB MINISTERIAL MEETING IN APRIL 1976).

BEYOND THE AFRICAN CONTEXT, SENGHOR HAS WON ADMIRATION OF SUCH DIVERSE LEADERS AS KIM IL SUNG, THE SHAH, MADAME GANDI, TITO, TRUDEAU, SOARES, MAO, ECHEVERRIA, KING BAUDOIN AND CEASCEAU. HE SEES GISCARD SEVERAL TIMES A YEAR AND PROBABLY HAS THE MOST PERSONAL INFLUENCE IN PARIS OF ANY AFRICAN.

B. PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS: SENGHOR IS A POSITIVE AND CHARMING HOST OF IMPECCABLE MANNERS AND GREAT PERSONAL DIGNITY AND PRESENCE. HE IS NOT, HOWEVER, PUFFED UP OR OVERLY SENSITIVE. HE QUIETLY DOMINATES THE AUDIENCES HE GIVES. HE HAS ENCYCLOPAEDIC KNOWLEDGE, GREAT INTELLECTUAL CURIOSITY AND SHARP ANALYTICAL ABILITY WHICH, OVER THE YEARS, HAVE KEPT HIM AHEAD OF MAJOR WORLD POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ISSUES. AT HEART HE IS A PROFESSOR AND HIS DISCOURSE IS PROFESSORIAL. HE IS A MASTER LINGUIST. SENGHOR DESPISES TARDINESS, SHODDY THINKING, AND

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PERSONAL DISCOURTESY. HE DOES NOT LIKE TO BE MISUNDERSTOOD. ORGANIZATION AND METHOD ARE THE HALLMARKS OF HIS STYLE AND, WHILE HE IS NIMBLE AND FLEXIBLE, HE PREFERS ADVANCED AND CAREFUL PLANNING. IN OTHERS HE ADMIRES LUCIDITY, FRANKNESS, HONESTY AND A PENCHANT FOR DIALOGUE. IN HIMSELF HE PROBABLY MOST ADMIRES HIS ABILITY TO MEET NEW CHALLENGES AND SOLVE OLD PROBLEMS.

C. SENGHOR CONSIDERS HIMSELF AN AFRICAN DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST, AVOIDING BOTH THE EXCESSES OF THE MOST LIBERAL EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN STATES AND THE STRICTURES OF THE EASTERN POPULAR DEMOCRACIES. INTELLECTUALLY HE WOULD AIM FOR A SYSTEM RELEVANT TO AFRICAN REALITIES WHICH FELL SOMEWHERE BETWEEN SWEDEN AND YUGOSLAVIA. HIS PERSONAL BIAS IS CLEARLY TOWARD WESTERN EUROPE, PARTICULARLY FRANCE, AFRICA AND THE MEDITERRANEAN WORLD, AND ATLANTIC FRIENDS: US, CANADA, MEXICO, AND BRAZIL. HIS VIEWS ON US AND AMERICAN SOCIETY ARE BEST SPELLED OUT IN EXTRAPOLATION FROM THE THEME OF HIS MAY 1975 PEN CLUB SPEECH: THE US CAN LEAD THE WORLD TO A UNIVERSAL CIVILIZATION IF IT MATCHES ITS SCIENTIFIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS BY POLITICAL AND HUMANITARIAN LEADERSHIP DRAWING UPON THE SO FAR UNDER-UTILIZED RESOURCES OF THE DIVERSE ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS HERITAGES OF ITS POPULATION. THE WORLD NEEDS THE US-- BUT UNLESS THE US ACCEPTS THE CHALLENGE SOON IT WILL BE TOO LATE AND THE EASTERN IDEOLOGIES WILL CARRY THE DAY.

D. BEHAVIOR IN NEGOTIATIONS: SENGHOR IS NORMALLY COURTEOUS, REASONABLE AND DISPASSIONATE EVEN IN DISCUSSING TOUGH ISSUES. HE IS DIRECT, ALTHOUGH SOMETIMES HE REFUSES TO COMMENT ON A SUBJECT RATHER THAN TACITLY DISAGREE. BUT WHEN PRESSED HE WILL MAKE CLEAR HIS OBJECTION OR DISAGREEMENT. WHILE HE IS RESERVED IN BEARING, SENGHOR IS NOT SHY. SENGHOR TREATS COMPLEX ISSUES WITH GREAT SKILL AND CARE. HIS SPEECHES, MOST OF WHICH HE PREPARES PERSONALLY, ARE THOROUGH, SCHOLARLY ANALYSES INVOLVING EVIDENT RESEARCH.

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